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# Industrial Disputes, Australia

The number of disputes (strikes or lockouts), employees involved and working days lost; cause of dispute; duration; and the reason work resumed

Reference period December 2021

Released 10/03/2022

## On this page

[Key statistics](#)

[Overview](#)

[Long-term trends](#)

[Industry](#)

[States and territories](#)

[Cause of dispute](#)

[Working days lost](#)

[Reason work resumed](#)

[Data downloads](#)

[Methodology](#)

## Key statistics

In the December quarter 2021:

- 55 disputes occurred.
- 57,200 employees were involved and 68,500 working days lost.
- disputes occurred in 8 industries and in 8 states and territories.

During the year ended December 2021, there were 130 disputes and a total of 116,600 working days lost.

	Quarter		Year ended	
	September Quarter 2021	December Quarter 2021	December Quarter 2020	December Quarter 2021
Number of disputes				
Commenced in period (no.)	39		37	71
Total (no.)	50		55	77
Employees involved				
Newly involved ('000)	11.7		50.6	10.2
Total ('000)	13.3		57.2	11.4
Working days lost ('000)	18.5		68.5	33.5
				116.6

## Overview

In the December quarter 2021, there were:

- 55 disputes, 5 more than from the previous quarter.
- 57,200 employees involved, an increase from 13,300 in the previous quarter.
- 68,500 working days lost, an increase from 18,500 in the previous quarter.

Year ended estimates:

- 130 disputes occurred, 53 more than in the previous year.
- 116,600 working days were lost, 83,000 more than the previous year.

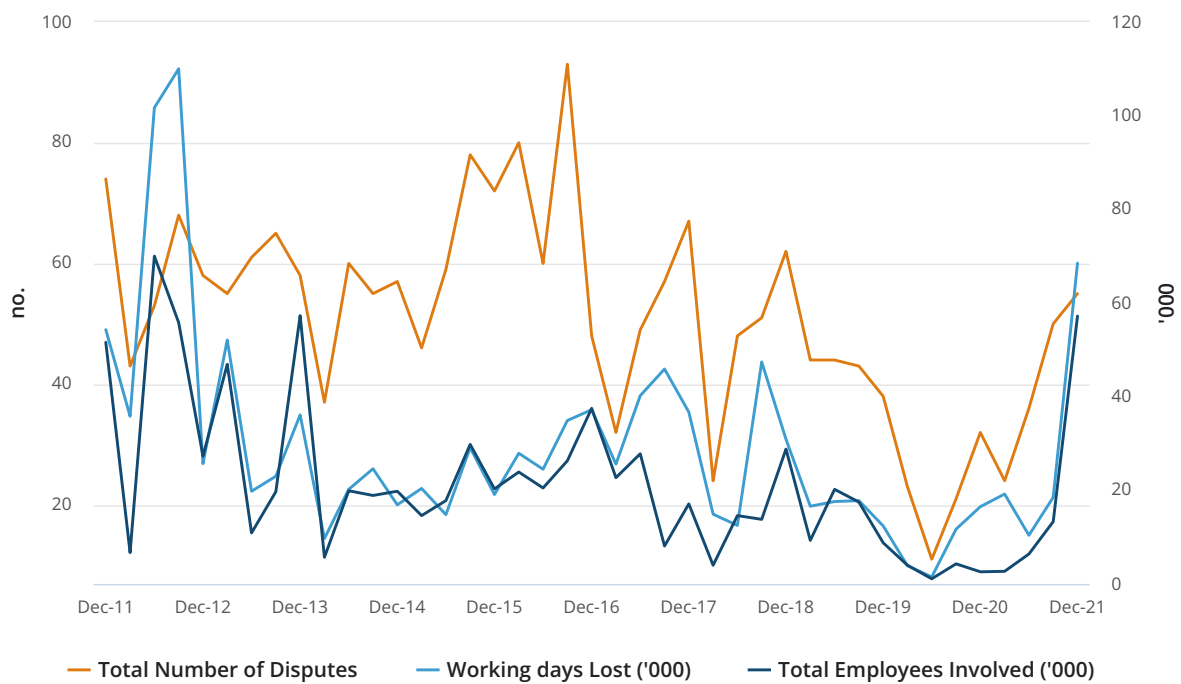
## Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter

	Number of disputes		Employees involved		
	Commenced in period	Total	Newly involved	Total	Working days lost
	no.	no.		'000	'000
December Quarter 2019	34	38		8.3	12.4
March Quarter 2020	17	23		2.9	3.9
June Quarter 2020	8	11		0.9	1.5
September Quarter 2020	19	21		4.2	11.7
December Quarter 2020	27	32		2.2	16.5
March Quarter 2021	22	24		2.3	19.2
June Quarter 2021	30	36		6.0	10.4
September Quarter 2021	39	50		11.7	18.5
December Quarter 2021	37	55		50.6	68.5

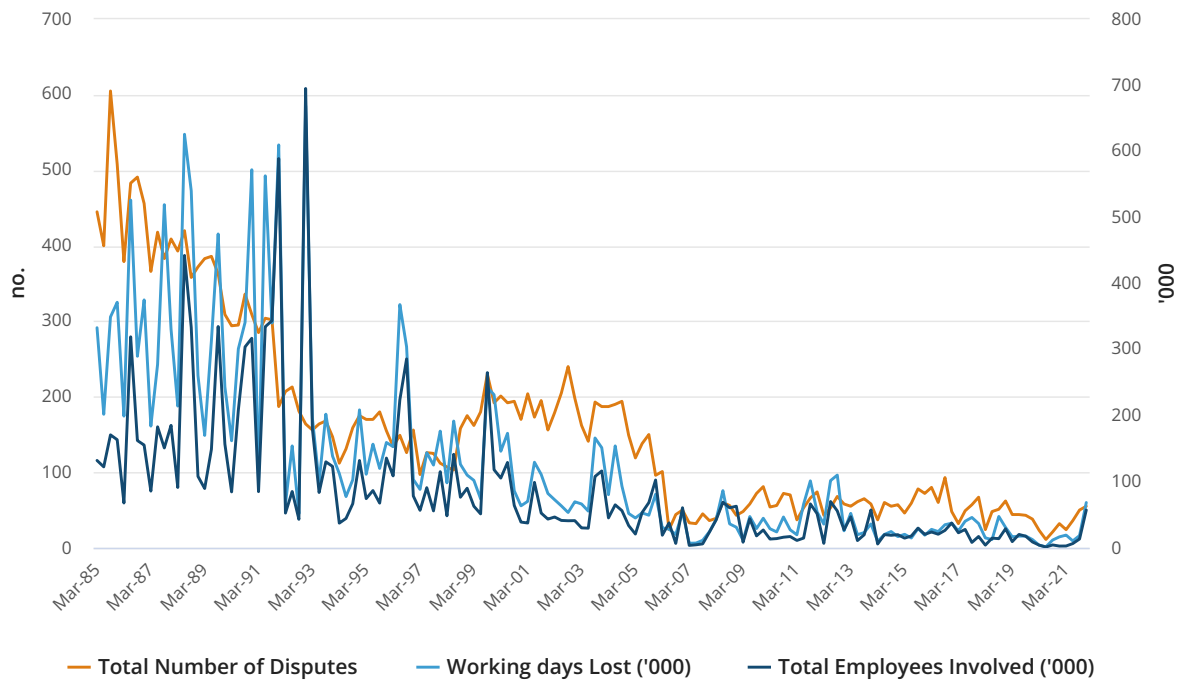
## Long-term trends

The level of industrial disputation over recent years is considerably lower than in the 1980's and prior decades.

## Industrial disputes in the last 10 years, Australia



## Industrial disputes historical series, Australia



## Industry

In the December quarter, disputes occurred in eight industries. More than six in ten (64%) working days lost were in the Education and training; Health care and social assistance industry.

## Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, industry

	September Quarter 2021		December Quarter 2021	
	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees
	'000	no.	'000	no.
Mining				
Coal mining	-	-	1.2	29.3
Other mining	-	-	-	0.2
Manufacturing				
Metal product etc (a)	1.8	5.1	2.5	8.0
Other manufacturing	1.3	2.5	4.2	8.4
Construction	3.3	3.8	1.1	1.2
Transport, postal and warehousing	8.7	15.8	11.4	19.8
Education and training; Health care and social assistance	0.1	-	44.0	15.5
Other industries (a)	3.2	0.5	4.0	0.6
<b>All industries</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>5.7</b>

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

a. See [Glossary \(https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/sep-2020#glossary\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/sep-2020#glossary) - Industry - for details of industries included.

## States and territories

Disputes occurred in eight states and territories in the December quarter, with more than three in four (76%) working days lost occurring in New South Wales.

## Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, states and territories

	September Quarter 2021		December Quarter 2021	
	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees
	'000	no.	'000	no.
NSW	4.0	1.1	52.1	14.0
Vic.	3.1	1.0	7.8	2.5
Qld	4.0	1.7	3.8	1.6
SA	1.2	1.5	2.0	2.4
WA	4.7	3.6	2.3	1.8
Tas.	1.4	6.0	0.2	0.7
NT	0.1	0.4	-	-
ACT	-	-	0.3	1.5
<b>Australia</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>5.7</b>

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

## Cause of dispute

Most industrial disputes are Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related. Over the past 10 years, disputes over employment conditions have generally been the most prevalent.

EB related issues were the cause of 78% of disputes (25 of 32) which ended in the September quarter 2021.

### Cause of disputes which ended during the quarter

	June Quarter 2021			September Quarter 2021		
	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000	no.	'000	'000
Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related						
Remuneration	8	0.4	1.8	7	0.2	0.8
Employment conditions (EB)	13	1.8	8.1	18	4.6	7.0
Other EB related	1	-	0.1	-	-	-
Non-EB related						
Remuneration	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employment conditions	-	-	-	1	0.7	0.5
Health and safety	2	0.6	0.3	5	0.7	0.9
Job security	-	-	-	-	-	-
Managerial policy	-	-	-	-	-	-
Union issues	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Non EB related	1	1.0	0.8	1	0.9	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>9.6</b>

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

## Working days lost

Working days lost is a measure of the length of a dispute, relative to the number of employees involved.

Of the 32 disputes which ended in the September quarter, 17 lasted for a day or less. These disputes had:

- 5900 total employees involved; and
- 4600 working days lost.

## Working days lost for disputes which ended during the quarter

	June Quarter 2021			September Quarter 2021		
	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000	no.	'000	'000
Up to and including 1 day	13	2.4	1.7	17	5.9	4.6
Over 1 day and up to including 2 days	4	0.2	0.3	5	0.2	0.3
Over 2 and less than 5 days	3	0.8	2.7	6	0.9	2.5
5 and less than 10 days	2	0.4	3.0	4	0.3	2.3
10 days and over	3	0.2	3.5	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>9.6</b>

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

## Reason work resumed

The reason work resumed relates to the last day of action taken. Resumption of work can occur without resolution to the issues that triggered the dispute.

There was a pre-determined return to work for 75% of disputes (24 of 32) which ended in the September quarter 2021.

## Reason work resumed for disputes which ended during the quarter

	June Quarter 2021			September Quarter 2021		
	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000	no.	'000	'000
Negotiation without intervention of a third party	6	0.4	3.1	4	0.3	1.1
State legislation	1	np	np	-	-	-
Federal legislation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pre-determined return to work	16	3.2	6.6	24	4.9	7.2
Resumption without negotiation	1	np	np	4	2.1	1.3
Mediation	1	0.1	1.4	-	-	-
Other reasons	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>9.6</b>

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

## Data downloads

### Changes to Excel file format

As foreshadowed in the [September quarter 2021 release \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/industrial-disputes-australia/sep-2021#data-download\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/industrial-disputes-australia/sep-2021#data-download), Industrial Disputes data file spreadsheets are now released in .xlsx format. While this change will improve usability, it may also require changes to automated macros or similar programs that call on the previous .xls format. This change does not impact on previously released data.

## Time Series Spreadsheets

⬇ Download all (475.19 KB)

Table 1: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period

⬇ [Download XLSX](#)

[58.58 KB]

Table 2a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days



lost, industry

↓ [Download XLSX](#)  
[53.19 KB]

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Table 2b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, industry

↓ [Download XLSX](#)  
[52.92 KB]

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Table 3a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, states and territories

↓ [Download XLSX](#)  
[63.23 KB]

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Table 3b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, states and territories

↓ [Download XLSX](#)  
[61.56 KB]

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Table 4a: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, cause of dispute

↓ [Download XLSX](#)  
[89.97 KB]

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Table 4b: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, working days lost per employee involved

↓ [Download XLSX](#)  
[62.48 KB]

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Table 4c: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, reason work resumed

↓ [Download XLSX](#)  
[76.74 KB]

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## Labour themes and navigation on the ABS website to change on 25 March 2022

As [previously advised \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/industrial-disputes-australia/sep-2021#upcoming-changes\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/industrial-disputes-australia/sep-2021#upcoming-changes), the thematic groupings and navigation for labour statistics on the ABS website are being updated to better reflect the current range of available labour statistics, better align key labour market concepts with website themes and navigation, and improve discoverability. The new themes (and the statistical releases which will appear under each theme) can be viewed on our Beta website, at [beta.abs.gov.au/statistics.html#labour](https://beta.abs.gov.au/statistics.html#labour) (<https://beta.abs.gov.au/statistics.html#labour>). The changes will be implemented on the ABS website on Friday 25 March 2022.

The new themes will be:

- Employment and unemployment
- Jobs
- Earnings and working conditions
- Labour Accounts

Industrial Disputes statistics will move from the 'Earnings and work hours' theme ([abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/](https://abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/)) to the renamed 'Earnings and working conditions' theme ([abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/](https://abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/)). The key changes (from the current 'Employment and unemployment' and 'Earnings and work hours' themes) include:

- addition of a 'Jobs' theme - to reflect the increasing range of jobs-related data ABS is releasing – including Weekly payroll jobs and wages and Jobs in Australia (currently in 'Earnings and work hours'), in addition to the longstanding statistics on Job vacancies and Job mobility (currently in 'Employment and unemployment').
- addition of a 'Labour Accounts' theme - for cross-cutting quarterly and annual labour account data on jobs, people, hours and payments (currently in 'Employment and unemployment').
- renaming the 'Earnings and work hours' theme to 'Earnings and working conditions' - to provide a clearer pathway the large range of information available on working conditions beyond wages (work arrangements, flexibility, workplace relations, etc) and reflect that key hours data are available from the 'Employment and unemployment' theme (from the monthly Labour Force Survey) and the Labour Account.

While these changes will result in a change to the placement of some statistical releases, and some URLs, there will be automatic redirects in place. These redirects will ensure that existing URLs and bookmarks will continue to work.

## **Inquiries**

For inquiries about these and related statistics, contact the Customer Assistance Service via the ABS website Contact Us page. The ABS Privacy Policy outlines how the ABS will handle any personal information that you provide to us.

## **Previous catalogue number**

This release previously used catalogue number 6321.0.55.001.

## **Methodology**

[Industrial Disputes, Australia methodology, December 2021](#)